

Companion robots featured at Shanghai electronics show

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More than 50 companies are showcasing a new generation of robots at this week's Shanghai CES electronics show, built to serve as companions at home, attendants at shopping malls or just provide entertainment.

Chinese companies including Shenzhen-based startup Aelos Robotic Inc. are displaying robots with heightened dexterity and skills.

Beijing's Canny Unisrobo Technology Co. Ltd. is a pioneer in the field, with its Canbot, produced in cooperation with Microsoft, having entered [mass production](#) almost a decade ago.

Sales manager Zhang Jianting said Thursday that annual sales are about 150,000 units, with the home companion robots selling for \$130 to \$483 depending on size.

However, Zhang said the robot market is growing ever more crowded, with many more players entering this year alone.

"The [robot](#) market in China is increasingly diverse," Zhang said. "However, there are still some rough edges in R&D and comprehensive abilities. Every [company](#) is at initial stage. We are still learning and making progress in terms of technology, R&D, and market."

Artificial intelligence and virtual reality are also major features of the show, which features 400 exhibitors from 23 regions showing their innovations from June 7 to 9.

For John T. Kelly, the senior director of CES Asia, the participation of more Chinese companies at global electronics shows illustrates how China is shifting from a manufacturing economy to one based on innovation.

"Chinese companies continue to grow more and more in importance. They are creating partnerships with Western partners to really further their technology. So we are seeing development of technology advancing rapidly," Kelly said.

Among those leading the charge for artificial Intelligence, or AI, is Rokid Corp., maker of the Pebble home companion device that can help seniors perform household chores, provide entertainment and help children learn new skills.

"AI makes our life simpler. AI is replacing human beings in more fields. It saves humans' labor, so we can do more creative work," said Li Yuanpeng, the company's product manager.

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